

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action of 17 October 2003. Claims 1-23 and 25-35 are pending in the application; Claims 1-23 and 25-35 have been rejected.

Claims 1, 11, 16, 23 and 31 have been amended; Claims 24-30 has been cancelled; and Claims 36-37 have been added.

No new matter has been added.

In view of the amendments above and remarks below, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and further examination.

About The Invention

The present invention relates generally to methods and apparatus for universal remote controllers. The present invention relates more particularly to means and methods that reduce the number of button pushes required to operate a remote control unit, and additionally reduce the number of keying errors. Various embodiments of the present invention provide a universal remote control that can be programmed to associate each of a plurality of classes of "buttons" with a particular one of a set of target devices. For example, the Power control buttons can be user-programmably associated with a set-top box, while Transport control buttons can be user-programmably associated with a VCR. Once a user-programmable association has been made, activation of any one of a plurality of buttons in a class of control buttons results in the transmission of a code recognized by the associated target device without having to first activate the target selection button.

Claim Objections

Claim 23 is objected to because of an informality. More particularly, the Examiner notes that Claim 23 depends from Claim 24 which is missing. The Examiner has required correction.

Claim 23 has been amended so that it properly depends from independent Claim 16. Applicant respectfully submits that this amendment overcomes the objection to Claim 23.

Objections to Drawings

The Examiner has objected to the drawings under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The Examiner states that "a user input signal source, a classifier coupled to the user input signal source, an address generator coupled to receive input from the user input signal source and the classifier, a control code memory coupled to receive input from the address generator, [and] a transmitter coupled to receive input from the control code memory" must be shown, and has required a proposed drawing correction or corrected drawings in reply to Office Action.

With respect to the transmitter coupled to receive input from the control code memory, Applicant has submitted a proposed drawing correction to Fig. 5. This correction, shown in red, includes a transmitter coupled to receive input from the control code memory. Support for this correction can be found in the specification at page 6, lines 22-24; and page 11, lines 14-17, and 27-31.

With respect to a user input signal source, a classifier coupled to the user input signal source, an address generator coupled to receive input from the user input signal source and the classifier, and a control code memory coupled to receive input from the address generator, Applicants respectfully traverse the objection to the drawings. Applicants respectfully submit that a user input signal source is shown as the keypad 104 shown in Fig. 5; a classifier coupled to the user input signal source is shown as the class table 508 in Fig. 5; an address generator coupled to receive input from the user input signal source and the classifier is shown as the target table 510 in Fig. 5; and a control code memory coupled to receive input from the address generator is shown as the control code

memory 512 in Fig. 5.

Applicant submits that in view of these remarks and the correction described above, the objection to the drawings has been overcome.

Rejections under 35 USC 102(e)

Claims 1-23 and 25-35 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Herz (US Patent 6,407,779).

Herz discloses a universal remote control system that provides: bidirectional communications between the remote control and at least one of the audio/video devices; a dual communication mode; automatic communication mode selection; loading and processing of an electronic program guide in the remote control; a soft graphical user interface in the remote control; an expansion of a television set's functions by the remote control; a calibration handshake between the remote control and an audio/video device; updating of the remote control; a lost beacon signal in the remote control; a handwriting recognition mechanism, and a voice recognition mechanism in the remote control.

By this amendment, independent Claims 1, 11, 16, and 31 have been amended to recite various aspects of programmed association mode of the present invention. Herz does not appear to disclose, suggest, or provide motivation for the invention defined by the amended Claims. Support for these amendments can generally be found throughout the specification, and can more particularly be found at pages 8-9.

In view of the amendments to independent Claims 1, 11, 16, and 31, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of Claims 1, 11, 16, and 31, and the Claims which depend therefrom, have been overcome.

New Claims 36-37

New Claim 36-37 depend, directly or indirectly, from amended independent Claim 1, and are directed to an aspect of the present invention in which the programmed association mode is, respectively, deactivated and reactivated. The specification clearly sets forth the sequence of pressing a target selection button, pressing a programming button, and pressing a command button, at which point the programmed association mode is set and active. The specification further describes deactivating the programmed association mode by pressing any one of the target selection buttons, and reactivating the programmed association mode by pressing another, designated button. Support for new Claims 36-37 can be found in the specification at pages 9-10.

Applicant respectfully submits that Herz does not appear to disclose, suggest, or provide motivation for the invention defined by new Claims 36-37. Herz does not disclose Applicant's claimed programmed association mode and therefore cannot disclose means or methods for deactivation and reactivation thereof.

Conclusion

All of the rejections in the outstanding Office Action of 17 October 2003 have been responded to, and Applicants respectfully submit that the pending Claims 1-23 and 31-37 are now in condition for allowance.

Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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FIG. 5

